

Message Text

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10/46

ACTION EA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 1719

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CORRECT GARBLED TEXT THROUGHOUT)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, BM

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION EQUIPMENT FOR GUB

REF: RANGOON 1685

1. EXPERTS GROUP MET JUNE 20 TO DISCUSS GUB REQUEST FOR FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT AND NIGHT-VISION DEVICES. WE BELIEVE DETAILED DISCUSSION OF POPPY-ERADICATION PROGRAM AND ITS PHILOSOPHY, ALONG WITH SOME OTHER DETAILS, MIGHT MORE PROFITABLY BE ADDRESSED AFTER RETURN OF COLONEL AUNG HTAY AND GROUP. HOWEVER, WE FELT THAT QUESTIONS INVOLVED IN CHOICE OF PLANE AND VISION DEVICES

WARRANTED SEPARATE DISCUSSION. EXPERTS AT MEETING INCLUDED: COLONELS MAUNG MAUNG, GSO-1, BURMA ARMY; KO GYI, COLONEL AIR STAFF; LTCOLONEL KYAW HTOON, DDSI; DATT COLONEL JACKSON, AIRA LTCOLONEL MARKS; POLITICAL ECONOMIC SECTION, MR. MCDONNELL. FOLLOWING POINTS EMERGED.

2. AIRCRAFT: TWO MISSION ARE ANTICIPATED, A PRIMARY MISSION OF RECONNAISSANCE (VISUAL AND PHOTO) AND A SECONDARY ONE OF COMMAND AND CONTROL.

A. BOTH MISSIONS REQUIRE AN ANTICIPATEDNDADIUS OF ACTION OF
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150 NAUTICAL MILES. FOR COMMAND AND CONTROL MISSIONS, WHICH

WOULD BE FLOWN DURING ACTUAL PLANNED OPERATIONS AGAINST PRE-LOCATED TAR35 , ENDURANCE WOULD BE A FACTOR AND A NOMINAL DURATION OF 4 HOURS IS ANTICIPATED.

B. MISSION CREW MEMBERS FOR RECONNAISSANCE WOULD BE THREE--PILOT, CO-PILOT, AND AT LEAST ONE OBSERVER; FOR COMMAND AND CONTROL, CREW WOULD TOTAL SIX -- PILOT, CO-PILOT, VHF RADIO OPERATOR (COMMAND AND CONTROL OF GROUND UNITS), UHF OPERATOR (DF TARGET LOCATING) AND TWO DDSI PERSONNEL.

C. AIRCRAFT WILL BE OPERATING OVER TERRAIN OF 8,000 FEET ELEVATION AT FLIGHT ALTITUDES UP TO 20,000 FEET, AND SHOULD HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF SAFE, SINGLE-ENGINE OPERATION AT ANTICIPATED ALTITUDES AND GROSS WEIGHTS.

D. A TACTICAL CONSIDERATION WHOSE IMPORTANCE IS UNDERScoreD BY RECENT EXPERIENCE IS THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE. TRAFFICKERS ARE INCREASINGLY ON THE ALERT AGAINST DETECTION BY GUB FORCES, AND MAY BE WARNED OFF BY UNFAMILIAR AIRCRAFT OVERHEAD.

E. DISCUSSION: (1) THE EXPERTS CONSIDERED THREE SPECIFIC AIRCRAFT: THE BEECHCRAFT KING AIR, THE TURBO-COMMANDER, AND THE F-27. IN THE LIGHT OF THE FIRST THREE CRITERIA STATED (A,B,C, ABOVE), THE F-27 WOULD RANK FIRST, THE TURBO-COMMANDER SECOND, AND THE KING AIR THIRD. BY THE TACTICAL CRITERION OF SURPRISE, ONLY THE F-27 GETS GOOD MARKS, BECAUSE F-27'S ARE OPERATED BY BURMA AIRWAYS IN VICINITY OF TARGET AREED. (2) THE KING AIR COULD PROBABLY PERFORM THE PHOTO RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS; HOWEVER, THE LOW WING WOULD RESTRICT THE VISUAL RECONNAISSANCE CAPABILITY AND THE CARGO/CREW CARRYING CAPACITY MAY LIMIT THE COMMAND AND CONTROL MISSION CAPABILITY. THE TURBO-COMMANDER COULD PERFORM BOTH THE VISUAL AND PHOTO RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONHQBUT LIKE THE KING AIR, MAY BE LIMITED IN ITS CAPACITY TO PERFOROYTHE COMMAND AND CONTROL MISSION. BOTH KING AIR AND TURBO-COMMANDER ARE PHYSICALLY CAPABLE OF CARRYING THE EQUIPMENT AND CREW OF THE COMMAND AND CONTROL MISSION, HOWEVER, THE WEIGHT-CARRYING CAPACITIES OF AIRCRAFT ARE ESSENTIALLY CONSTANT AND AS THE WEIGHT OF CREW AND EQUIPMENT IS INCREASED, FUEL QUANTITY MUST NECESSARILY DECREASE AND THUS LIMIT THE RANGE AND ENDURANCE CAPABILITIES. THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE KING AIR AND THE TURBO-CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMANDER IS \$750,000 EACH. THE F-27 CAN MORE THAN SATISFY ANTICIPATED MISSION REQUIREMENTS. THIS "OVERKILL" IS ALSO REFLECTED IN THE ESTIMATED INITIAL COST OF APPROXIMATELY \$1.2 MILLION. IF ONE COULD QUANTIFY THE FACTS THAT NO ADDITIONAL MAINTENANCE OR PILOT TRAINING NEED BE CONDUCTED, ANDTHAT THE LOGISTICS AND PARTS-SUPPLY CAPABILITIES ARE ALREADY IN BEING THEN THE TOTAL COST OF THE F-27 WOULD BECOME COMPETITIVE.

3. NIGHT VISION DEVICES:

A. DISCUSSION AT THIS LEVEL REVEALED A WIDE DISCREPANCY OF ASSUMPTIONS AS TO PRICE, WHICH MUST BE CLEARED UP BEFORE ANY DETERMINATION CAN BE MADE AS TO AN APPROPRIATE NUMBER TO CONTEMPLATE SUPPLYING TO THE GUB. THE GUB EXPERTS THOUGHT THE STARTRON MK-303 A COST APPROXIMATELY \$800, ABOUT ONE-FIFTH WHAT OUR EXPERTS THOUGHT. IT WAS ON THE BASIS OF THE LOWER COST ASSUMPTION THAT THE GUB ASKED FOR 100 DEVICES--CALCULATING ON ONE DEVICE PER SQUAD FOR A FORCE OF THREE BATTALIONS (NOT AN EXCESSIVE FORCE IN VIEW OF THE TERRAIN AND TACTICS INVOLVED). THE GUB EXPERTS INDICATED THAT THEIR REQUIREMENTS MIGHT BE SCALED BACK TO A DOZEN DEVICES, ONE PER COMPANY, THREE OR FOUR PER BATTALION, IF THE UNIT COST WERE AS HIGH AS OUR SIDE SUGGESTED.

B. IN ADDITION TO THE STARTRON MK-303-A, THE GUB EXPERTS DISCLOSED AN INTEREST IN A HAND-HELD DEVICE (THE STARTRON BEING RIFLE-MOUNTED) WITH A SOMEWHAT GREATER RANGE (800 TO 1000 METERS). WE DO NOT KNOW IF THESE ARE IN OUR INVENTORY, BUT WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S CHECKING WHETHER SUCH DEVICE IS AVAILABLE, AND ITS COST.

4. ACTION REQUESTED:

A. PLEASE ADVISE WHAT FURTHER INFORMATION IS NEEDED IN CONNECTION WITH AIRCRAFT REQUEST.

B. PLEASE CLARIFY COST OF MK-303-A STARTRON AND ASCERTAIN AVAILABILITY AND COST OF ADDITIONAL HAND-HELD DEVICE.

C. PLEASE INFORM EMBASSY OF ANY DISCUSSION HELD WITH AUNG HTAY AND GROUP PERTINENT TO GUB NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS, AND GIVE US GUIDANCE ON FURTHER INFORMATION WE SHOULD TRY TO CONFIDENTIAL

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ELICIT ABOUT REQUEST FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT AND NIGHT VISION DEVICES.

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